

County of San Diego - Parks and Open Space Program

Contributing to the County of San Diego Strategic Plan Environment Initiative

"Promote natural resource management strategies that ensure environmental preservation, quality of life, and economic development"

Learn about the
San Diego Barrel cactus

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Flora Vista Kindergarteners show enthusiasm for local wildlife

"Now we're going to talk about another type of habitat called grasslands. Can anyone guess what lives in grasslands?" Hands shot up as the kids began giving answers: "Grasshoppers...Grass?"

These questions were part of a County of San Diego MSCP presentation on June 14th to more than 60 Flora Vista Elementary School kindergarteners. The presentation included a slideshow of native wildlife found within the County and a discussion of our different habitats such as the desert, forest and wetlands. Kim Zuppiger led the presentation, alongside fellow staff members Cheryl Monzon, Christine Carta and Rick Sakow.



Kim Zuppiger leads a presentation on San Diego's biodiversity for Flora Vista kindergarteners.

Each student received a sticker of a different plant or animal to wear for the day and help illustrate what biodiversity is. The main message of the presentation was that everyone needs a place to live, whether you are a boy or girl or wild animal. County staff explained how the MSCP helps find areas that are appropriate for wild animals to live and areas appropriate for people to live. The presentation was concluded by discussing the ways that each of us can help: pick up trash, don't feed wild animals or bring them home, don't release your pets into the wild and appreciate wildlife by exploring local parks or open space preserve.

MSCP Annual Report Workshop was a success!



Fun with a purpose: Members of the public attend a ranger-led hike through Mission Trails Regional Park at the recent MSCP Annual Report Workshop.

Each year the MSCP partners host an Annual Report Workshop in order to give the public and all interested parties a chance to become informed of our program's progress over the last year. Over 80 people attended this year's workshop, which was held on June 17th at Mission Trails Regional Park. The MSCP partners hosting the workshop included the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, California Department of Fish and Game, County of San Diego, City of San Diego, City of Poway, City of Chula Vista and the Conservation Resources Network.

The day's activities began with hour-long hikes along trails in Mission Trails Regional Park which were led by MSCP Staff and Park Rangers, who highlighted local flora and fauna and explained the goals of the MSCP. The hikes were followed by a presentation of the accomplishments in 2005 including habitat preservation, management, monitoring and future planning. Together, the MSCP partners acquired 397.4 acres for preservation in 2005.

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Currently, we have conserved 68% of our goal of 172,000 acres of habitat. The presentation also highlighted the completion of various habitat management plans, the restructuring of the MSCP monitoring plan and details on species-specific surveys by various MSCP partners. The presentation concluded with a status update on habitat conservation planning in our area. The highlight of the status update was that the City of Chula Vista's MSCP Subarea Plan has come on board with the issuance of an official take permit and a signed Implementing Agreement. Additionally, the County provided updates on its future North and East County MSCP Plans.



Dave Mayer of the California Department of Fish and Game shows the status of habitat acquisition in San Diego County through Dec. 2005.



Members of the public look at the USGS display at the poster session of the MSCP Annual Report Workshop.

The presentation was followed by a poster session in the Visitor Center with displays from the U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, City of San Diego and County of San Diego. The poster session provided an opportunity to ask more specific questions, collect handouts from various jurisdictions and to visit with the live animals brought by USGS.

On behalf of the MSCP Outreach Committee, who coordinated this event, we would like to thank the City of San Diego Park and Recreation staff who hosted us at Mission Trails Regional Park, the County of San Diego and City of San Diego rangers who led our hikes and our presenters: Tom Oberbauer (County of San Diego), Dave Mayer (California Department of Fish and Game), Clark Winchell (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and Dahvia Locke (County of San Diego).

MSCP Highlighted Species: Barrel Cactus



The San Diego Barrel Cactus grows most commonly as solitary individuals with chartreuse flowers blooming in the early to mid-summer.

The San Diego Barrel Cactus (*Ferocactus viridescens*: Cactaceae) has a long history with San Diegans. In fact, there are historical accounts of Native American tribes that used hollowed-out barrel cacti as storage containers or cooking pots. Barrel cacti are also known in Native American legend as "the compass plant" because they tilt toward the south (the north side is more protected from the sun). Today, the San Diego Barrel Cactus can be found in desert scrub habitats throughout San Diego's coastal region.

The Barrel Cactus is extremely tolerant of fluctuating climates, surviving high temperatures and mild frost as well as being drought-tolerant. It grows most commonly as solitary individuals with chartreuse flowers blooming in the early to mid-summer. The optimal habitat for the San Diego Barrel Cactus is Diegan Coastal Scrub hillsides, often growing at the crest of slopes. It can also be found on the periphery of vernal pools in Otay Mesa on varying types of soil. They make a good addition to native home gardens. The status of the San Diego Barrel cactus is declining, but they still grow in many locales.



14th Annual National Trails Day celebrated at Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

County and City Parks and Recreation Hosted Free Event



Hazy Meadow Ranch and Carriage Company, Lakeside provided free wagon rides at National Trails Day event.

On June 3, 2006, trail enthusiasts from all over San Diego County celebrated National Trails Day[®] at Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. This was the 14th year for the American Hiking Society's signature trail awareness program. The theme for this year was "Experience Your Outdoors", encouraging citizens to enjoy the high quality parks and recreation experiences that trails provide.

To commemorate National Trails Day, the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation teamed up with the City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department to host a free, family-oriented event at the park's historic adobe ranch house. Over 1,000 people attended the day long event.

Trail activities included a 50-participant equestrian trail ride sponsored by the Ramona Trails Association and a mountain bike ride sponsored by the San Diego Mountain Bike Association. Activities for kids included Astro-jumps, coloring contest, and pony rides. Other activities included a rock climbing wall, tours of the adobe ranch house, opportunity raffle, food and live entertainment.



Sheriff's Volunteer Mounted Patrol looking at map of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve at National Trails Day event

Informational outreach booths were set up by the County and City Parks and Recreation Departments, the San Diego County Parks Society and canyon stakeholders. Other booth participants included local conservancies, trail councils, and other community trail organizations.

For more information about Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and the trails in San Diego County, please visit www.sdparks.org

Rancho San Diego Roots & Shoots students grow host plant for captive-breed endangered butterfly

Roots & Shoots is a global humanitarian and environmental organization conceived by Dr. Jane Goodall. Since the spring of 2003, the Rancho San Diego Root & Shoots club has painted Dr. Goodall's vision for Roots & Shoots clubs world-wide. The club members are composed of Hillsdale Middle School students that want to make a difference in their community and globally. They are led by Ms. Marion Soloway, a science teacher at Hillsdale Middle School, who is also the Director for Roots & Shoots in the San Diego region.

This past spring, with the donations of supplies and training from RC Biological Consulting, Inc., the students grew 11 flats of dwarf plantain (*Plantago erecta*), one of the host plants for the federally endangered Quino checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas editha quino*). The student leader for the project, Laurel Watkins, ensured that the seeds were watered as needed and kept Robin Church of RC Biological Consulting informed of their status. There was much excitement as the seeds began to germinate and fill in the flats. Once they were ready, the flats were delivered to the captive rearing facility at Murrietta High School where Dr. Pratt had over 1,000 Quino checkerspot butterfly larvae that were eager to begin eating the *plantago*.

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County Opens Santa Ysabel Preserve in Julian

Public Welcome to Enjoy Unique Habitat and Trails Experiences

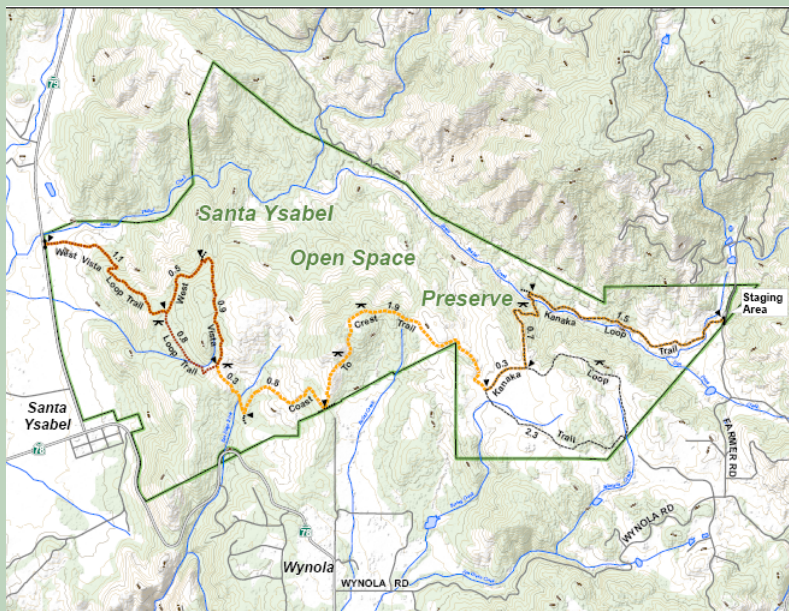
The grand opening of the Santa Ysabel Open Space Preserve was celebrated by many when it was opened to the public for the first time on June 29, 2006.

Santa Ysabel highlights the County's ability to provide public recreational opportunities while preserving its valuable natural resources. The Parks and Recreation field staff did an amazing job working with the California Conservation Corps to get the preserve and the 11.5 miles of trails ready, and the Resource Management staff put together a comprehensive plan to protect, manage and monitor the natural and cultural resources while offering exceptional recreational opportunities. District 2 County Supervisor Dianne Jacob attended the ceremony, alongside County Parks Director, Renée Bahl and Susan Carter, the Deputy Director of the San Dieguito River Park. After the ribbon cutting ceremony, equestrians and hikers enjoyed inaugural trail rides and treks.



A ribbon cutting ceremony opened the Santa Ysabel Open Space Preserve to the public on June 29, 2006. The newly opened preserve offers even more equestrian and hiking opportunities to local residents.

The 3,800-acre preserve offers 11 miles of scenic, un-motorized multi-use trails including an 8-mile segment of the Coast to Crest Trail. The preserve is home to various native species such as the spotted owl and golden eagle as well as oak woodlands and conifer forests. For more information please visit www.sdparks.org or www.sdrp.org.



11 miles of scenic trails run through the Santa Ysabel Open Space Preserve.

The County of San Diego welcomes you to visit the Santa Ysabel Open Space Preserve. It is open to the public on weekends, so help spread the word.

Directions to Santa Ysabel Open Space Preserve:

- Take SR78 into the town of Julian, to Main St.
- Main Street turns into Farmers Road.
- Take Farmers Rd to Wynola Road and turn right, then a quick left back onto Farmers Rd.
- Pass the Volcan Mountain Wilderness Preserve Sign.
- Santa Ysabel Preserve will be on the left side approximately 1 mile from the Volcan Sign.
- Park along side Farmers Road. (Thomas Bros. Guide Page 1136, A1)



The MSCP Welcomes Our New Environmental Resource Manager

The County of San Diego's MSCP-Watershed Division welcomes our new Environmental Resource Manager, Dahvia Locke, AICP.



Dahvia brings nearly five years of County experience, including a unique perspective gained from working briefly in the Land Use and Environment Group Executive Office. She is a Certified Planner who has emphasized environmental planning and the tenets of sustainability in her studies and in practice. She has facilitated planning processes with a broad range of public and non-profit agencies and looks forward to working with the many stakeholders of the MSCP-Watershed Division programs.

Dahvia Locke will oversee the development of the East County Multiple Species Conservation Program Plan, the San Diego County Farming Program, and other projects. She will also coordinate on the development of the North County MSCP and is taking the lead on business process reengineering (BPR) and implementation of the County's Board Policy I-122.



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Another project the Roots & Shoots Rancho San Diego students are participating in is a restoration project in the Otay mountain region in conjunction with the Cal Trans Environmental Stewardship Branch. The club members wished to make a difference in their community after the 2003 wildfires that ravaged their neighborhoods. They learned that one of the few remaining stands of Tecate Cypress trees had been destroyed in the fires and that these trees are the host plant for the endangered Thorne's Hair-streak Butterfly. During the past 3 years, the club members (ages 5-18) have planted over 700 Tecate Cypress tree saplings at the base of Otay Mountain. They have returned to their trees quarterly to collect data and during the dry seasons they water their trees.

To learn more about Roots & Shoots please visit www.rootsandshoots.org. Another local school, Fuerte Elementary School now has a Roots & Shoots Club as well. If you have any projects that would be suitable for elementary or middle school students to work on, please contact Robin Church at (619) 463-1072 or Robin@rcbio.com.

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